own habits often neutralise the treatment he receives, so that these diseases remain as deep-rooted as ever in the peasant class.' If only they would pay attention, until more can be done, to the advice and directions which are given them! The answer is that even if they tried they could not hope to succeed, because the conditions under which they live are at every point unfavourable to the attempt. Here lies the heart of the problem.

(4) *Food and Drink*

Water is the first problem; not this time considered for its use in irrigation, which has been studied over and over again, but as a much more vital need in supplying human nourishment. Egypt is a hot country, and the fellah's work makes him sweat, so that thirst affects him more than most other people.

Where the owner of an *'ezba* has installed a pump, the fellaheen may get their water from an artesian well. If their village is on the river bank, they will use water from the Nile, which is silty but fresh-running. But more often than not they can drink only brackish and stagnant water from the irrigation canals.

In these, men and animals cleanse and relieve themselves; vegetables, clothes, and crockery are washed, and carrion is thrown away: and this is the place to which women come to get "drinking water". They bring it home in the early evening, in their ewers or tins, to fill up the great pot, or *zir*, that stands against the house wall. Each fellaha brings back about six gallons each evening for the next day's use. This water she adds to what already remains in the *zir*, so that the bottom is never dry, and never cleaned. The water stands all night, so that some of the dirt settles. It also cools, owing to evaporation through the porous clay. As for the drops which filter through, and which might be used to fill the drinking-pots with pure water for the morning, they simply run to waste in puddles or are drunk by the fowls.

The Government, however, is busily studying the question of supplying drinking-water to the villages, and numerous plans have been made.

Men have always added something to water to give it a taste. The fellah is no exception. Wine he does not drink,

273 as it is forbidden by his religion; he is in any case too poor to pay for it, and his head could not stand it.

272 Coffee was introduced into Egypt at the end of the fifteenth century by the Sufis of Yemen. The fellah drinks very little of it, far less than the people of Cairo(44). However, when he goes to the market he may sip a small cup or two while playing backgammon with his friends.

Since the war of 1914-18, exaggerated tea-drinking, after a fashion introduced from Tripoli, has taken the place of coffee-drinking, and has become the rule not only where menfolk meet together, but also in the home. Fellah families are accustomed to drink tea several times a day, and in considerable quantity. Not only the adults, but the smallest of the children, too, feel a need for tea. The fellah takes his teapot with him to the field. The poorest spend at least 30 piastres a month on tea and sugar. When they have not enough money to buy any, they lie flat on the ground, incapable of activity. "In one village", says Mgr Khousam, Bishop of Thebes, "I asked what had happened to the animals, which constitute the fellah's capital. There are none, they answered me. They have been sold to buy tea. Tea has become as much a necessity as bread."

By boiling the tea till it turns black, a thick, syrupy liquid is obtained, rich in tannin and alkaloids, which sooner or later ruins the stomach and the nerves, weakens the whole body, and debases the character. But it is comforting and brings forgetfulness.

[439 651] This black tea has become the drug of the fellah. Imports have tripled in a few years. The Government has also raised the duty to three times its original figure, from two and a half piastres to seven, and then to eight and a half piastres a kilogramme, to put it out of the fellah's reach. But the evil has not diminished, for those who have acquired the habit will do without food and starve their families rather than give it up. On the contrary the increased tax has only hastened the ruin of the fellah and of his health.

Merchants mix tea-leaves scavenged from hotels, cafés, and ships, with sawdust, bean husks, and dry *molokhiya* or poplar leaves. This mixture, coloured and baked, they sell to the wretched fellaheen, when they cannot get tea by smuggling.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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112.

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832

Gāi min beʿīd yitmaḫṭar,
wil-lūli ʿala ṣudro itbaḥtar.
Hāt el-mudām, ya ḫilli, u-nuskar,
šēi ginān wil-lēl ma banām.

She comes, in the distance, with swaying gait,
And the pearls are scattered o'er her breast.
[273] Bring forth the wine, my dearest, we will drink ourselves drunk,
A mad affair, and at night I will not sleep.

1. See Note on l. 2, No. 111.

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

than the Friday's ceremony. This day's breakfast,[1] the first for a month, consists, if possible, of fresh or salted fish, with all kinds of fruits and delicacies, in order that the body may be gradually accustomed to its usual course of life. People appear in their holiday clothes, and the shops are shut. On this day shirts covered with a year's dirt are exchanged for brand-new garments even among the poorest, gay silken stuffs infold those parts and members of the body that were previously exposed, costly cloths flutter round the head, and the cheerful colours of the bright red, bright yellow, green, and blue coats show vividly in the morning sun. The little girls, who are allowed to run about the streets and markets only on rare occasions, on this day flutter about like brilliant butterflies through the whole town, in their fire-red clothes, their faces carefully painted and touched up, and their persons hung with ornaments of gold and silver. A nameless joy beams in and from out the heart of everybody. No longer is there any enemy, any hateful unbeliever; high and low are all one, the whole citizens embrace each other—liberty, equality, fraternity. A round of visits is made from house to house; officials and people of the higher ranks give a very imposing reception, and everybody wishes everybody else a happy new year, though the new year will not come for three months yet. After the visitor has embraced his host round the neck, bending over his right and his left shoulder, coffee, and sherbet are brought, or the half-fermented native beer made from barley, and called *buza*. Everybody serving another in any capacity on this day receives from his master a money present or at least a new garment. The women also adorn themselves and hold receptions for each other, but this is done to a greater extent on the following day, as they have too much to do on the first day in preparing liquors for the male guests. Any other kind of work is out of the question. The remaining portion of such holidays passes quietly, the chief times of the day being proclaimed by the reports of a cannon as well as by the muezzin. As early, however, as the second day of the feast some persons who are eager after business open their shops and buy and sell;

[1] [i.e., following the fast of Ramadan—Analyst]

9: Klunzinger D-5 (1863-1875) 1878
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527 trille, since games of chance are strictly forbidden by the
524 Mohammedan religion, as well as wine and fermented liquors
[779] generally. The loser is often jeered, and has his forehead
[273] stamped with his own seal as a mark of disgrace; but if he
then beats his opponent the latter has to wipe off the mark
with his own robe, and is marked by the other.

527 Next day a grand *Fantasie* is held (a general name given
[533] by the Arabs to an entertainment where anything merry is
[535] to be seen or heard) in the form of a dance with music and
singing. Such an entertainment has little resemblance to a
Frankish ball, which has accordingly preserved its own
special name of *bale*. In the court, or the space in front of the
house, even though this be the street, carpets and straw mats
are spread, benches are placed, and many-branched candel-
[354] abra and brilliant paper lanterns or oil-lamps with coloured
water are suspended above the scene of the nocturnal festivi-
ties. Soon after night-prayer everybody flocks to the spot,
527 high and low, young and old, invited and uninvited. A number
535 of dancing-girls step up. They take off their street mantles
[292] and display themselves in their richest attire, from the gold-
[301] embroidered skull-cap, and gold trinkets round the neck and
over the heart, to the silken bows upon the polished boots;
but on such a public occasion there is no impropriety. The
dancing-girls of the ancient Egyptians appear to have worn
a very transparent dress; they also are often represented as
quite naked; even the short skirts of the modern ballet-girl
are seen in some representations. The hair of our dancing-
[302] girls smoothed, oiled, and plaited, their dotted faces, their
rich and gaudy dresses—all is faultless. The childish forms
seem to have become filled out, the haggard faces under the
mystic half light of the illumined darkness and the effects of
the "Joseph's beauty" (rouge) have recovered their youthful
freshness; the really pretty have become charming. The
533 orchestra has already taken up its position on the ground;
534 some gray-bearded fathers are strumming on the two strings
527 of their spindle-shaped fiddles; a jolly musician blows the
reed-clarionet; matrons with buckram voices sing to plaintive
tunes, beat hand kettle-drums and swing cymbals or tam-